

“Cliff Notes” for Lesson on Peacemaking and Non-Violence

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Chapter Peacemaking and Non-Violence, pp. 168-185, by Mary Emily Briehl Duba.

A) *Practice Nonviolence –*

“A Vow of Nonviolence

Before God the Creator and the Sanctifying Spirit, I vow to carry out in my life the love and example of Jesus

- By persevering in the nonviolence of tongue and heart through an openness to personal conversion
- By continually working to create just relationships in the world, my community and my personal life
- By striving for peace within myself and seeking to be a peacemaker in my daily life through prayer and acts of forgiveness and reconciliation
- By refusing to participate in acts of violence or to retaliate in the face of provocation and by seeking creative responses to conflict
- By living conscientiously and simply so that I do not deprive others of the means to live or harm the earth
- By actively resisting the evils of oppressive structures and the causes of war
- And by embracing the redemptive suffering of Jesus and believing in the transforming power of the cross.” (p.169)

B) *One Step at a Time*

“A few months before our college graduation, my best friend and I had a terrible falling out. Though a believer in the power of reconciliation, I did not know what to do with the pain and anger seething inside of me. Never before had I felt such a profound inability to forgive or that terrible hatred that eats you from the inside, leaving you hollow and helpless...

Then my friend Mary gave me an incredible gift: freedom from the obligation to make peace. She proposed that I take one whole year of grace time, time in which I wasn’t allowed to even think about reconciliation. I didn’t have to pray for him or for the desire to forgive – she would do that for me. When that year was up, Mary gave me a second year in which to begin remembering the humanity of my friend – to tell stories about the adventures we shared, to put pictures of our escapades in photograph albums, to reconnect with mutual friends from whom I had distanced myself as well. Very slowly, I began to realize that over the course of those years, Mary had not been helping me to avoid the hard work of peacemaking. She had been disarming my heart. She had been living as community with me, reminding me that we never do the difficult work of peacemaking alone....

Jesus teaches his disciples [But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Luke 5:44)]..... Shalom – the Great All-Is-Well has room for grief and anger because it is not a state of perfection, but of diligent communal affirmation of each and every member’s humanity. What shalom cannot accept is peace declared when there is no peace.” (p.174-5)

C) *Jesus' Third Way*

Truth-telling: Jeremiah 8:11, Jer 36:27-32

"Truth telling is central to each of the many forms of nonviolent, active resistance. These forms can include everything from public protests, community boycotts, and civil disobedience, to parenting, art and scholarship. Each of these actions, done with honesty for the sake of peace, can expose the falsified peace that masks injustice or violence. The form of nonviolent resistance chosen by peacemakers depends on the situation they are confronting, the means available to them, and the effect they seek." (p. 175)

"Exercising our subversive imaginations, we ask, What would happen if Christians devoted the same discipline and self-sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking that armies devote to war?"

"Jesus practiced nonviolent, active resistance in his public life and teachings. He disobeyed the laws of civil society and religious purity codes by breaking bread with outcasts, touching the untouchables, speaking with women and children and keeping company with the poor. Jesus upsets social standards of rank and association. He committed civil disobedience by healing on the Sabbath....exposing the way people were misusing the Sabbath law to keep the infirm afflicted, the poor hungry and the widowed powerless" (p.176)

"Jesus taught [disciples] creative ways to convert situations of oppression into opportunities to preserve the humanity of both the oppressed and the oppressor. In a society where Roman soldiers could order conquered people to carry their packs for one mile, Jesus instructed his followers to volunteer to carry them for two miles. Doing so preserved their agency in the situation. When they were demeaned by a backhanded slap across the face, Jesus told them to turn the other cheek as well. Because the left cheek cannot be struck backhanded in a right-handed society, this peaceful confrontation would force the aggressor to either back down or to lose status by fighting the person as an equal." (p.177)

"We all, however, must consider the ways in which we play the oppressor, whether wittingly, carelessly or by our participation in unjust social structures." (p.177)

"The greatest danger in peacemaking is that we will cease to love our enemies, to desire life and wholeness for them, and to long for transformation – theirs and ours. Knowing this, many Christian peacemakers gather regularly for confession, prayer and discernment. These acts are elements in congregational worship every week" (p.178)